

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims and their status as of this Amendment is as follows:

Claims 1 through 14 (Cancelled)

15.(Currently amended) A screw connection for at least two hinge parts, comprising a screw configured for interconnecting the at least two hinge parts, wherein the hinge parts engage one inside the other and have an upper hinge lobe, a lower hinge lobe, and at least one middle hinge lobe, said screw having a screw head and a screw shank that extends through a first through opening in the upper hinge lobe and extends through a second through opening in the middle hinge lobe, with a thread permitting the screw shank to be screwed into the lower hinge lobe, and comprising a sleeve that surrounds the screw shank, has elastic properties, and interacts with the upper and middle hinge lobes when the screw is in a screwed-in state, whereby the diameter of the second through opening is less than or equal to the diameter of the first through opening, and the screw has at least one bearing surface for contacting the sleeve with at least one engaging surface that is aligned in the direction of movement in which the screw is unscrewed, the improvement comprising:

the screw shank having an annular collar that, in the screwed-in state[,] is situated in the middle hinge lobe, said annular collar providing said at least one engaging surface to retain and support said sleeve thereagainst.

16.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 15, wherein the screw shank is provided with at least one annular groove.

17.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 16, wherein the sleeve engages a longitudinal section.

18.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 15, wherein the screw shank has at least one bridge.

19.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 18, wherein the bridge has a circumferential ~~design~~ perimeter and is at least partially enclosed by the sleeve.

20.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the annular collar acts as a guide collar for insertion of said screw into said second through opening in said middle lobe.

21.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the sleeve, when viewed crosswise to the longitudinal extension of the screw, is disposed so as to project at least partially over the annular collar.

22.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the diameter of the screw shank in the region of the annular groove is less than the diameter of the second through opening.

23.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein in the circumferential surface of the first through opening is provided at least one longitudinal groove, running parallel or essentially parallel to the direction of movement in which the screw is screwed and unscrewed ~~and~~ for protecting the sleeve from twisting.

24.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 23, wherein at least two longitudinal grooves of preferably the same size are introduced in the circumferential surface of the first through opening, and ~~that the~~ further wherein wall segments ~~of are~~ provided in the circumferential surface situated between the longitudinal grooves and preferably are essentially the same size as the longitudinal grooves.

25.(Currently amended) The screw connection according the claim 15 wherein the sleeve on its end opposite from the annular collar is constructed to be supported directly on the underside of the screw head or on a cylindrical projection extending from the underside of the screw head.

26.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 25, wherein the diameter of the screw head or the diameter of the cylindrical projection is less than the diameter of the first through opening.

27.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the sleeve in the screwed-in state is deformed in such a way that the sleeve material is pressed into ~~the~~ an annular space formed between the screw shank and the second through opening.

28.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 27, further comprising a cylindrical projection extending from the underside of the screw head and wherein the sleeve material is pressed into ~~the~~ a gap formed between the screw head and the cylindrical projection and the first through opening.

29.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 27, further comprising at least one longitudinal groove and wherein the sleeve material is pressed into said at least one longitudinal groove.

30.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the sleeve has an annular-shaped cross section, and at the end thereof facing toward the screw head ~~optionally~~ has a section that conically tapers in the direction of the thread.

31.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the sleeve on its end facing toward the thread is provided with at least one recess for accepting

~~the a~~ wall segment formed in the circumferential wall of said first through opening.

32.(Previously presented) The screw connection according to claim 15, wherein the second through opening has an annular-shaped cross section.

33.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 32, wherein ~~the opening~~ at least a portion of the circumferential wall of the second through opening that faces toward the screw head in conically tapered.

34.(Currently amended) A screw connection for at least two hinge parts, comprising:

at least two hinge parts which engage one inside the other and have an upper hinge lobe with a first through opening, a lower hinge lobe, and at least one middle hinge lobe having a second through opening, each of the through openings having a diameter and the diameter of the second through opening being less than or equal to the diameter of the first through opening[.];

a screw configured for interconnecting the at least two hinge parts, said screw having a screw head and a screw shank that extends through the first through opening in the upper hinge lobe and extends through the second through opening in the middle hinge lobe, with a thread permitting the screw shank to be screwed into the lower hinge lobe, the screw having a screwed in state, and the screw having at least one bearing surface ~~for the sleeve and an annular collar~~ with at least one engaging surface that is aligned in the direction of movement in which the screw is unscrewed, ~~the screw shank having an annular collar that, when~~ in the screwed-in state, is being situated in the second through opening of the middle hinge lobe; and

a sleeve with elastic properties that surrounds the screw shank ~~having elastic properties, and interacting and is engaged and supported by said at least one engaging surface of said annular collar, said sleeve being positioned to interact with the upper and middle hinge lobes when the screw is in the screwed-in state.~~

35.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 34, wherein the screw shank is provided with at least one annular groove.

36.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein the sleeve engages a longitudinal section formed in said first through opening.

37.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 34, wherein the screw shank has at least one bridge.

38.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 37, wherein the bridge has a circumferential ~~design~~ perimeter and is at least partially enclosed by the sleeve.

39.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein the annular collar acts as a guide collar for insertion of said screw into said second through opening in said middle lobe.

40.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein said sleeve, when viewed crosswise to the longitudinal extension of the screw, is disposed so as to project at least partially over the annular collar.

41.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim ~~34~~ 35, wherein the diameter of the screw shank in the region of the annular groove is less than the diameter of the second through opening.

42.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein in the circumferential surface of the first through opening is provided at least one longitudinal groove, running parallel or essentially parallel to the direction of movement in which the screw is screwed and unscrewed ~~and~~ for protecting the sleeve from twisting.

43.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to Claim 42, wherein at least two longitudinal grooves of preferably the same size are introduced in the circumferential surface of the first through opening, and ~~that the~~ further wherein wall segments ~~of~~ are formed in the circumferential surface situated between the longitudinal grooves and preferably are essentially the same size as the longitudinal grooves.

44.(Previously presented) The screw connection according to claim wherein the sleeve on its end opposite from the annular collar is constructed to be supported directly on the underside of the screw head or on a cylindrical projection.

45.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim ~~34~~ 44 wherein the diameter of the screw head or the diameter of the cylindrical projection is less than the diameter of the first through opening.

46.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein the sleeve in the screwed-in state is deformed in such a way that the sleeve material is pressed into ~~the~~ an annular space formed between the screw shank and the second through opening.

47.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 46, wherein the sleeve material is pressed into ~~the~~ a gap formed between the screw head and the cylindrical projection and the first through opening.

48.(Currently amended) The screw connection according to claim 46, wherein the sleeve material is pressed into at least one longitudinal groove formed in said first through opening parallel to or essentially parallel to the direction of movement in which the screw is screwed and unscrewed.

49.(Withdrawn) The screw connection according to claim 34, wherein the sleeve

Serial No.: 10/018,455

has an annular-shaped cross section, and at the end thereof facing toward the screw head optionally has a section that conically tapers in the direction of the thread.